

EAP 223 Academic Reading – Outside Reader: *Things Fall Apart*

PREREADING STUDY GUIDE – Chapters 8-10

Study Questions for Chapters 8-10 Use these questions to guide you through your reading of chapters 8-10.

1. What did Okonkwo do whenever he thought of his father's weakness and failure?
He thought of his own strength and success.
2. What did Okonkwo tell himself about his part in Ikemefuna's death?
He said he was becoming a woman. A man who had killed five men in battle should not fall to pieces over the death of a boy.
3. What did Obierika tell Okonkwo about his part in Ikemefuna's death?
Obierika said it was the kind of action that would not please the Earth; that the goddess would wipe out an entire family for such an action.
4. Describe the meeting to determine Obierika's daughter's bride price.
The suitor, Ibe, his father, Ukegbu, and uncle met with Obierika, his brothers, his son, and Okonkwo. They ate kola nuts and drank palm wine. Then Obierika gave Ukegbu a bundle of thirty short broomsticks. Ukegbu and his clan took the sticks outside. When they returned they gave a bundle of fifteen sticks to Obierika. He added ten more sticks and gave the bundle back. The two groups finally agreed at a bride-price of twenty bags of cowries.
5. The men began discussing rumors about white men. Who did they think the white men were?
The polite word for leprosy was "the white skin." The men in the hut thought the white men were lepers.
6. Describe the relationship between Ekwefi and Ezinma.
It was more like the companionship of equals, rather than that of mother and daughter.
7. Describe Ekwefi's difficulties in getting pregnant.
She had borne ten children, but nine of them had died in infancy. She began giving them names like "Death, I implore you" and "May it not happen again."
8. What did the medicine man tell Okonkwo after the death of Ekwefi's second child?
He said there was an *ogbanje*, a wicked child who, when it died, re-entered its mother's womb to be born again. He said Ekwefi should go and stay with her people when she became pregnant again.
9. Describe the burial of Ekwefi's third child, and the reason for it.
The medicine man ordered that there be no mourning or funeral. He mutilated the dead child and buried it in the Evil forest. He said this would make the *ogbanje* think about coming again.
10. Explain the significance of Ezinma's *iyi-uwa*.
This was a special kind of stone that formed the link between an *ogbanje* and the spirit world. If it were discovered, then the child would not die. When Okagbue found Ezinma's *iyi-uwa*, the people knew Ezinma's troubles were over.
11. How did Okonkwo cure Ezinma's *iba* illness?
He brewed a potion made of leaves and herbs, then put her over the steam.
12. What was the purpose of the ceremony described in Chapter 10?
A woman's birth family was having a dispute with her husband because he was mistreating her. The only decision the man would accept in the case was that of the symbolic meeting of the clan spirits.

Vocabulary for Chapters 8-10

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Context Clues.

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Use any clues you can find in the sentence, combined with your prior knowledge, to understand the italicized words.

1. "When did you become a shivering old woman," Okonkwo asked himself, "you who are known in all the nine villages for your *valor* in war?"
2. As she buried one child after another her sorrow gave way to despair and then to grim *resignation*.
3. In that way she will *elude* her wicked tormentor and break its evil cycle of birth and death.
4. He brought out a sharp razor from the goatskin bag slung from his left shoulder and began to *mutilate* the child.
5. Her husband's wife took this for *malevolence*, as her husband's wives were wont to do.
6. At first Ekwefi accepted her, as she had the others - with *listless* resignation.
7. ...she could not ignore the fact that some really evil children sometimes misled people into digging up a *specious* one.
8. "No," said Ezinma, whose feeling of importance was manifest in her *sprightly* walk.
9. Most *communal* ceremonies took place at that time of day....
10. The *egwugwu* house was now a *pandemonium* of quavering voices.
11. ...the spirits of the ancestors, just emerged from the earth, greeted themselves in their *esoteric* language.
12. There was a loud murmur of *approbation* from the crowd.

Note: The following words are necessary for understanding the story, but will not be tested.

*On the third day he asked his second wife, Ekwefi, to roast *plantains* for him. A banana-like fruit, used as a staple food in tropical regions.

*Obierika was sitting outside under the shade of an orange tree making *thatches* from the leaves of the raffia-palm. Plant stalks or foliage, such as reeds or palm fronds, used for roofing.

*In Abame and Aninta the title is worth less than two *cowries*. Any of various tropical marine gastropods of the family Cypraeidae, having glossy, often brightly marked shells, some of which are used as currency in the South Pacific and Africa.

Part II: Determining the Meaning Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

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| _C_ 1. valor | A. lacking in spirit or energy |
| _L_ 2. resignation | B. wild uproar or noise |
| _J_ 3. elude | C. courage in battle; bravery |
| _H_ 4. mutilate | D. understandable; clear |
| _F_ 5. malevolence | E. approval |
| _A_ 6. listless | F. evil or harmful influence |
| _K_ 7. specious | G. known only to the chosen few |
| _D_ 8. manifest | H. to disfigure or cripple |
| _I_ 9. communal | I. of a group of people. |
| _B_ 10. pandemonium | J. avoid; evade |
| _G_ 11. esoteric | K. seemingly reliable but incorrect |
| _E_ 12. approbation | L. lack of resistance; patient submission |